

February 25, 2005

SC PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

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Public Service Commission of S.C.
Attn: Docketing Department
P.O. Drawer 11649
Columbia, S.C. 29211

PROTESTANT
#2 5/4/05 10:20

RE: Docket # 2004-357-WS

Dear Sirs:

I would like to relay my opinion regarding the proposed price increase for Carolina Water Service customers. I feel that the proposed increase would be devastating to many of the persons affected, myself being one. I am single and have one job and often have trouble making ends meet, as I am sure that many of the retirees on fixed incomes do also.

Currently in order to keep the cost of my water and sewer down, I no longer use the dishwasher, as it uses quite a bit of water, and I try to cut the flushing of the toilet down to a bare minimum per day. Other than not bathing, washing clothes and hair, I have no other ways that I could cut down on my water usage. In fact, I am sure that I am in the category of most conservative water users in the Carolina Water Service area with the average water usage per month this past year being only 481 gallons per month.

However, the low usage does not benefit me in anyway with this proposed increase. I would have to pay the basic water rate of \$10.25 and the proposed sewer rate of \$40.92 per month. This would be a total of \$51.17 per month base pay for never using more than the 690 gallons which was the most I used any one month this past year. Currently my monthly bill is an average of \$41.58 per month; which I believe is already too high.

I believe that if Carolina Water Service really needs this increase it should be handled in a different manner so that those of us who do not use as much water are not charged as much as the persons who consume a great amount.

I feel that I have given this company more money over the past 15 years of their service than they really deserve for the quality of service provided. I must say that they have improved the water (I am now able to drink it) since they have been purchasing it from whichever plant it is - West Columbia or Lexington. Prior to them purchasing the water elsewhere it was really undrinkable and was destroying the plumbing systems of our houses.

I have looked to see what other water companies in South Carolina and surrounding areas charge for water and sewer and as I thought they charge MUCH LESS than Carolina Water Service does. As I am sure you are well aware of the charges of other companies I will list them here anyway to compare to Carolina Water Service.

City of Charleston - with 2003 increase inside city water is \$21.81 for minimum of 1,496 gallons and sewer is combined with this payment.

Sullivan's Island - with 2,000 gallons of water is \$8.33 for water and \$8.33 for sewer for a total monthly bill of \$16.65.

Tega Cay City – water is \$5.00 base charge and then \$3.90 per 1,000 gallons of water and \$5.00 base charge and then \$4.25 per 1,000 gallons for sewer.

Grand Strand – water and sewer base charge is \$14.85 combined with volume charge for 1,000 to 8,000 gallons of \$1.10 for water and \$1.65 for sewer.

These are only a few charges I found on the internet however I believe they show that Carolina Water is already charging more than most companies in the area.

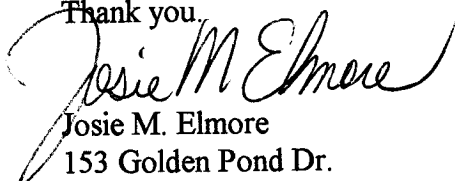
Looking at the proposed increase on the sewer rates the residential rate is the same as a commercial rate which is not fair to the residents of this area.

I wrote a letter to the Commission in 2001 when Carolina Water Service was trying to connect with the Town of Lexington for sewer service and was going to charge the customer far too much for that service as well. I think they should consider being more fair with how they charge their customers for water and sewer service. I have seen other areas take the amount of water used and charge an amount of sewer service which is equitable to the amount of water which was used. Those of us who are conservative with water usage should actually be getting a rebate or at least a discount for not using so much water and sewer services.

I am planning on retiring in the next 4-5 years and will not be able to handle this kind of water bill on the retirement pay I will be receiving. Please think long and hard before you allow this company to increase their rates so drastically.

As I said in the previous letter, I have no idea how Carolina Water Service ever got into this area, and I am sure that they are continuing to grow with all the housing going up in the Lexington County area. Many of the persons in the affected area are not those persons who are rich or better off than most persons living in Lexington County, but we are the backbone of this area and working at lower paying jobs and also many are working at minimum wage jobs that can not afford the constant large increases that Carolina Water Service is wanting. Surely there is a MORE EQUITABLE way to bring us the water and sewer services we deserve at a price we can AFFORD. We should not be required to pay such exorbitant fees for sewer services in order to defray the expenses of Carolina Water Service.

Thank you.


Josie M. Elmore
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